

**Testimony Regarding Support for HB 5283 & SB 229 and  
School Construction Funds for Public Charter Schools  
March 4, 2022**

**Dear Members of the Education Committee,**

**Thank you for your time this evening. My name is Rosemary Falcones, everyone calls me Rosie.**

**I am a recent graduate of Great Oaks Charter School in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I felt compelled to testify before you, even though it's difficult and scary to do so. But there is so much that my parents and I are worried about, that I decided to muster all my courage and come before you today.**

**When I heard that we had extra money as a state this year, I was excited. I thought for sure now, kids like me and my little sister who need support in our education, would undoubtedly be given help. I was saddened to know that if this budget passes as it is, the youth in my city and in other communities like mine, will again be overlooked.**

**I am here today because we are not using the surplus money we have to make sure all children receive funding based on their educational needs, regardless of which public school they attend, we just can't allow this to happen.**

**I know I echo the voices of so many in my community that feel the weight of oppression because we are minorities and live in underserved communities. Many promises are made to us that imply change and opportunities. We now, unlike any other time, have the unique opportunity to make significant change by closing the racial funding gap and removing obstacles for families like mine that deserve real options to move forward in life.**

**The time is now not next year, not years from now, generations have heard over and over again about the deficits in the budget. This is clearly the time to do right by my peers and I.**

**A little about myself. I come from a wonderful family, we are from Guayaquil Ecuador. I came to the US when I was about a year old. My Dad is a delivery man, but my Mom is currently unemployed. I am the oldest in the family and many times I feel so much weight on me. I am getting ready to go to college as a first generation student, but there are what feels like insurmountable challenges. As much as my parents want to support me, language is a barrier along with finances and the lack of a support system at the college entry level for youth like me.**

**I worry about my Mom who has been experiencing anxiety since the pandemic started. I worry about my sister who is dyslexic... What will life be like for her if she does not get the help she**

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**needs? I feel so much anxiety and wonder: how can I even think about pursuing my education when we have so much going on? It is paralyzing at times.**

**I certainly will not give up, but sometimes I feel like I am losing hope.**

**Today I simply ask the members of this Committee to keep your eyes on kids like me; who want to be the leaders of tomorrow that Governor Lamont spoke of in his speech last week. Help us get the funds that we need to make words an actual reality in my life and the life of youth like me.**

**Respectfully,**

**Rosemary Falcones**

**Great Oaks Bridgeport Public School Graduate  
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